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Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 28 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/37 B, a workshop was held in Chile from 13 to 15 September 2011, under the auspices of the United Nations, in support of the first phase of the first assessment cycle of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the attached summary of the workshop (see annex).

I would kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 76.

(*Signed*) Octavio **Errázuriz**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 28 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

[Original: Spanish]

Final report of the workshop held under the auspices of the United Nations in support of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

Santiago, Chile, 13-15 September 2011

I. Background

1. Pursuant to the recommendations made at the second meeting of the Special Plenary Working Group on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects, a workshop was held from 13 to 15 September 2011 at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile, under the auspices of the United Nations, in support of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects.

2. The workshop was conducted in close coordination between the host country, Chile, and the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, and was organized with the cooperation of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific. It received financial support from the United Nations Programme for the Environment (UNEP). Its proceedings unfolded in line with the agenda (see annex 1). A list of participants and observers is contained in annex 2.

II. Proceedings of the workshop[1]

3. As suggested in the guidelines for workshops, the host country appointed the Chair and Vice-Chair of the workshop, who were, respectively, Héctor Soldi, the Secretary-General of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, and Leonardo Guzmán, the representative of the Fisheries Development Institute of Chile. The Chair appointed Marcelo Nilo, the Director of Scientific Affairs of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, as Rapporteur.

4. The workshop began with a series of expositions on various aspects of the regular process. The following presentations were made:

[1] All the presentations made at the workshop are available at: http://proceso.ordinario.cpps-int.org/docs/chile-sept-2011.

4.1 *Coordination of the regional workshop of the South-East Pacific.* Mr. Héctor Soldi, Secretary-General of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (annex 3)

Mr. Soldi, after referring to the decision of the countries of the South-East Pacific to coordinate their participation in the regular process in the context of the Commission, highlighted the activities carried out to date, including cooperation in the organization of the workshop.

4.2 *General presentation on the aims, scope and outcome of the workshop.* Mr. Alan Simcock, Group of Experts of the Regular Process (annex 4)

Mr. Simcock, who adopted a cross-cutting approach in describing the frameworks for discussion[2] that required the participants' consideration, emphasized the aims, scope and desired outcome of the workshop.

4.3 *The current status of the proposed outline for the first integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment.* Mr. Peter Harris, Group of Experts of the Regular Process (annex 5)

Mr. Harris described the current status of developments in the preparation of the proposed outline[3] for the first integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment and reviewed the list of topics identified in the various sections of the assessment, including some illustrative examples that clarified specific topics.

4.4 *Outcome of countries' prioritization of items for the first integrated marine assessment of the regular process.* Mr. Marcelo Nilo, Director of Scientific Affairs of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (annex 6)

The Director of Scientific Affairs of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific gave a presentation in which he described the work carried out by five countries (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru) on prioritization of items for the proposed outline for the first assessment, highlighting the issues that were of greatest importance to the region.

[2] The representative of Saudi Arabia, in commenting on the list of recommendations of the Special Plenary Working Group with respect to potential focal points for workshops, asked why the area of sea to the east of Saudi Arabia was not listed. In reply, it was stated that that area was covered by the description of the area of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Regional Commission for Fisheries which did appear on the list. The representative of Saudi Arabia then observed that, such being the case, it would be appropriate to add a footnote annotating the description and in all future uses of the term to state that it had no effect on existing international agreements and established maritime boundaries.

[3] The representative of China, referring to the version of the possible outline for the first global assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, that had been circulated by the Co-Chairs of the Special Plenary Working Group, read out the comments submitted by the Group of 77 and China. The coordinator of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process explained that the process of revising the possible outline was ongoing and took account of the varied comments received. Once the process had been finalized and had been reviewed by the Group of Experts, it would be posted on the website of the Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and/or the website of the regular process (when the latter had become operational).

4.5 *Criteria for the standardization and organization of information for the assessment*. Mr. Patricio Bernal, Group of Experts of the Regular Process (annex 7)

Mr. Bernal expounded on the criteria for the standardization and organization of information for the integrated assessment, as contained in the guidance document for the authors of the assessment. He laid particular emphasis on certain information quality attributes and other features that should, to the extent possible, characterize the assessment process (method, data, validation, traceability) and the incorporation of information therein.

4.6 *Guidance for authors involved in developing the outline for the integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment*. Mr. Alan Simcock (annex 8)

Mr. Simcock spoke about the guidance for authors involved in developing the outline for the integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment, emphasizing technical aspects, peer reviews, the criteria for the appointment of experts and the need to draw up a list of experts.

4.7 *Regional seas agreements and action plans*. Mr. Alberto Pacheco, UNEP regional seas programme (annex 9)

In his presentation, Mr. Pacheco spoke about the regional seas and the important contribution they could make to the regular process. He raised the possibility of extending support to the regions under the training planned as part of the regular process.

5. After every presentation, time was allotted for comments by the participants. The main observations were as follows:

- In accordance with the guidelines for the workshop, and given the volume of work that would be involved in the selection and assessment of the information for the structuring of the report by the countries of the South-East Pacific region, it was necessary to expand the list of experts who would contribute to the assessment process in that region.
- Emphasis should be placed on the importance of correctly identifying the need for capacity-building to drive the comprehension and internalization of integrated analysis methods for the marine environment, including issues from the multidisciplinary standpoint as well as those that were governance-related. The role of the United Nations, United Nations programmes and specialized agencies in support of the regular process was deemed critical for the region.
- Biodiversity at the regional level should be studied in greater depth.
- The coverage of consultations in the prioritization process should be expanded by including a broader range of experts.
- Additional clarification was required regarding the methodological framework adopted by the United Nations — drivers, pressures, state, impacts, responses (DPSIR) — and its connection with the outline for the first integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment. It would be appropriate to consider, in the context of the integrated assessment, the methodological approach used in large marine ecosystem projects and in particular the

transboundary diagnostic analysis available to Chile and Peru (GEF/Humboldt Project).

- It would be helpful to establish from the outset the frameworks for carrying out information analysis: the type (qualitative/quantitative), spatial and temporal scales and scope of each analysis. The same comment applied to information sources (particularly databases) and their provenance.
- Attention was drawn to the large volume of information in assessments and surveys carried out in academia. Such information was rich in content and reliable, given the high level of professionalism found in academic circles and the fact that information even underwent peer review. It should therefore be considered and made use of in the regular process. Information generated by the private sector could also be helpful.
- The nature of the data required in order to embark on an integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment should be clarified.
- Any regional databases, metadata and information available should be assessed in the light of the standards proposed by the Group of Experts.
- There was a need to look in depth at methodological issues, given the possibility of discrepancies where points of agreement were lacking and the scientific basis was weak or non-existent.
- Methodological options that would allow use of the maximum amount of available information should be sought. The options should enable data quality to be improved and brought in line with the proposed standards.
- The importance of the notion of expert judgement should be recognized in every assessment with a scientific and technical basis.
- The existence of regional information-gathering processes based on international standards should be recognized.
- The wealth of knowledge available at the national level should receive attention and be shared, and it should be scaled up to the regional level in accordance with common standards.
- Given the magnitude of the undertaking, emphasis was placed on the need to receive support for capacity-building and technical and financial assistance; the offer made by the representative of the UNEP regional seas programme was therefore welcome.

6. To organize the work of the participants, the following working method was adopted at the suggestion of the members of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process: three groups based on the principal disciplinary areas of the experts present and relevant to the regular process were formed. The working groups thus identified were:

- Working Group I: physical sciences (physical and chemical oceanography, geophysics, marine geology and pollution)
- Working Group II: biological sciences (biodiversity, fisheries biology, marine ecology and marine biology)

- Working Group III: socio-economic aspects (economics, resource economics, fisheries economics, national and regional planning, demographics and econometrics)

7. Each Working Group contained a representative of the Group of Experts of the Regular Process as coordinator and an expert from the region as rapporteur. Annex 10 describes how the integration of the Working Groups and their coordinators operated.

8. The Groups met consecutively, each being allotted a full three-hour working session. The sessions were open to all the participants in the workshop, thereby encouraging wide-ranging discussions covering the different disciplinary areas. Each Group had a list of questions prepared in accordance with the guidelines for workshops held in support of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects.

9. According to the information collected to date, the main elements identified by each of the Working Groups in response to the general questions, were as follows:

A. Working Group I: physical sciences

Coordinator: Mr. Peter Harris

Rapporteur: Captain Edwin Pinto (Ecuador)

1. What assessments exist that might be useful in the regular process?

Assessments of a regular nature:

(a) Regional oceanographic cruises of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, conducted by Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, in which there is simultaneous monitoring of physical, biological and physical conditions up to a depth of 500 metres. The results are published annually after they are reviewed by the participating countries. The information from these cruises is stored at the Commission;

(b) Climate alert bulletins coordinated by the Commission. These bulletins are issued monthly and present a compilation of oceanographic and meteorological information for the region in a single document, together with a short-term forecast;

Other assessments include:

(c) Periodical monitoring of physical, chemical and biological parameters by means of oceanographic cruises and coastal surveys. The information obtained from these cruises and surveys is published and disseminated differently in each country and is stored in national databases on an individual basis;

(d) Monitoring the quality of coastal waters (Peru);

(e) Comparison of areas with and without upwelling since 1987 (Panama);

(f) Oceanographic research cruises since 1950 with results published in the scientific literature. An evaluation of physical data in fjords has been

carried out in conjunction with fisheries research and has been reported for the past 18 years (Chile);

(g) The erosion of the coastal area has been evaluated in an annual publication (Colombia);

(h) Monitoring of pollutants in coastal waters (Panama);

(i) Regional surveys of ports, waves and relative sea level (Ecuador).

2. If there are no useful assessments available, is there unevaluated information that can be used?

(a) Average sea-level measurements. The countries of the South-East Pacific have tide-gauge stations, some of which have been operating consecutively for several decades. In the majority of cases this information has not been properly corrected or lacks gravimetric measurements and cannot therefore be used in determining average sea-level measurements;

(b) Glacier shrinkage. Glacier shrinkage is normally studied by meteorological institutes, yet it affects the behaviour of estuary ecosystems (Ecuador);

(c) Mangrove deforestation. Another issue which has not been included in the study of estuaries is mangrove deforestation, which directly affects estuary ecosystems (Ecuador);

(d) Antarctica database. Antarctica research programme, with a database started in the 1970s, covering an extensive geographical area (Chile). Other countries also have research programmes in Antarctica, with more recent sets of data. This information has not been evaluated at the regional level in the context of climate change (Peru and Ecuador);

(e) Surveys from ocean and coastal platforms. Systematic monitoring for the installation and operation of platforms for hydrocarbon extraction (Peru) and for aquaculture and port infrastructure (Chile). Seismic studies to determine the presence of hydrocarbons in the ocean subsoil (Ecuador and Colombia);

(f) A sediment map. A sediment map developed in the 1980s is currently being updated and covers depths from the coastline to 300 metres. In recent years more modern mapping equipment has been used and in some cases has reached a depth of 500 metres (Peru);

(g) Paleo-oceanographic surveys. Paleo-oceanographic surveys with sediment evidence have provided information about the structure of the ecosystem going back to the year 1200 in the central part of the seabed corresponding to the Callao and Pisco areas (Peru).

3. Can any information lacunae that must be filled be identified?

The group identified a series of information lacunae and the following series of available information, which needs to be retrieved:

(a) Remote sensors. Mexico mentioned the availability of information from remote sensors covering an area between latitudes 3°N and 33°N for the interpretation of a number of physical and biological surface parameters.

Ecuador stated that it had a similar station whose coverage overlapped geographically with the coverage indicated by Mexico but which did not as yet provide operational products. Chile observed that it too possessed that type of information, while Colombia and Peru said that they generated sea surface temperature maps with information from remote sensors;

(b) Ocean buoys. Mexico raised the issue of ocean buoys. Ecuador stated that there had been an attempt to install buoys in the countries of the region but that, owing to acts of vandalism, they had had to be withdrawn. Peru noted that its buoys project had met the same fate. The attempt to collect information far from the coast needed to be strengthened in order to fill information lacunae;

(c) Measurements of pH, carbon absorption (ppCO2 in the ocean-atmosphere interface) and oxygen minimum depth. Measurements are taken during regional cruises of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific; however, since this information is not intercalibrated, its use in the regular process is difficult;

(d) Anecdotal information. Mention was made of the importance of including stories and information which may prove useful in the analysis of marine and coastal processes even though they lack the necessary scientific rigour. There are established protocols for the objective reclaiming of such information;

(e) Patterns of coastal circulation. Experts from Panama commented on the importance of determining circulation patterns in coastal areas and charting the morphology of the seabed to identify the habitats of species, for example, to study the distribution of larvae as a bioindicator of El Niño/Southern Oscillation. Other countries analysed different bioindicators;

(f) Non-recurrent monitoring. Recurrent monitoring at the country level focused on areas of interest (ports, protected areas) and there were no general bioregionalization maps;

(g) Heat flows, water quality, fresh water flows. Projects could be promoted that focus on interdecadal variations normally associated with problems relating to El Niño/Southern Oscillation, but which could help in the analysis of other variables;

(h) Scattered data exist. The World Wide Fund for Nature and countries are in general agreement that a great deal of information is available, but that there is a lack of resources to process and collate all this information;

(i) Study of priorities for conservation of the seas. The Nature Conservancy is resuming the work it carried out in 2007 on priorities for the conservation of the seas and coasts of South America, and has offered to make the results of this work available to the regular process. The Nature Conservancy will also continue its work on the Humboldt Current;

(j) Information beyond 200 miles. The work of the Group of Experts will be extended to cover a comprehensive assessment of the ocean, and while the region is in a position to conduct an analysis of the coastal zone and, in some regards, as far out as 200 miles, there is also a need for an expert appraisal of the state of the rest of the ocean, including zones beyond national

jurisdictions (high seas). This will require support from experts in the western South Pacific (Australia, New Zealand and the island countries of the South Pacific) acting in concert with experts in the eastern South Pacific. It was also pointed out that there is a great deal of information on zones beyond national jurisdictions in oceanographic institutions that regularly operate scientific fleets with global reach.

4. What assessment procedures have been established informing decision-making in the region?

These procedures did not constitute a separate topic of discussion, however it was clearly established that within the region there is a well-developed set of oceanographic data and analytical capacity. The socio-economic impact of El Niño/Southern Oscillation on the region has made this a special focus of attention, with the existence of cooperative research programmes and national programmes on mitigation of its impact.

5. What development of capacities is required?

The Group identified short-term training needs in the following areas:

(a) Technical support for the maintenance of equipment and sensors;

(b) Greater number of experts able to conduct research on climate change with reference to oceans;

(c) Development of projects and research capacity on palaeoclimatology at the regional level, including effects on marine coastal areas (corals, sediments, ice cores, etc.);

(d) Monitoring of harmful algal blooms by remote sensing;

(e) Capacity to organize databases using standardized formats and tools for access by the public (Google).

B. Working Group II: biological sciences

Coordinator: Mr. Patricio Bernal

Rapporteur: Ms. Andrea Rueda (Colombia)

1. What assessments exist that might be useful in the regular process?

(a) Regular assessments exist of fishing activities by national fishing industries in all the countries of the eastern South Pacific region. The assessments are conducted periodically and serve as the basis for the annual adoption of fishing regulations. The assessments are not collated on a medium- or long-term basis. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) prepares a periodic compilation of aggregated fishing and aquaculture data, and has a historical data analysis series covering more than 25 years;

(b) Secondly, within the region there exist ad hoc assessments incorporating biological aspects, conducted in connection with a wide variety of marine environment issues. For example, artisanal fishing, coastal zones, port infrastructure, biodiversity and protected areas, sea-based and land-based pollution, ballast water. In general these assessments cover a smaller area and are limited to a single aspect.

2. If there are no useful assessments available, is there unevaluated information that can be used?

In the south-east Pacific region there exists a great quantity and variety of scientific and technical information on environmental issues and the use of resources. This information is available in the form of:

(a) Scientific and technical publications subject to anonymous review;

(b) Published technical reports, available in the form of limited edition documents and maintained in documentation centres;

(c) Unpublished technical reports. Such documents exist in great numbers and contain very valuable information in terms of regular reporting on and assessment of the marine environment. These reports are available in the archives of public and private institutions responsible for their preparation. In general such reports are generated in accordance with a regular cycle. This is true, for example, of reports on the status of species which are fished on an industrial or artisanal scale, as well as of many environmental impact assessments of investment projects in coastal zones, or major infrastructure projects (ports and Panama Canal).

3. Can any information lacunae that must be filled be identified?

The Group of Experts taking part in the workshop agreed that geographical coverage of the information varies. In general, more data and biological information exist and there is better coverage in coastal zones. With the exception of the fishing industry, whose ocean surveys and assessments normally extend to the limits of the exclusive economic zone, there is a great dearth of environmental information and data in the region beyond the coastal and littoral zone and the adjacent continental shelf.

4. What assessment procedures have been established informing decision-making in the region?

(a) The assessment procedures with the longest history and greatest institutional support are those conducted by States;

(b) With regard to other uses, there are State regulations and international commitments (Lima Convention, London Convention) regarding protection of the marine environment that give rise to intermittent assessment exercises. Assessments of marine pollution are available in the region;

(c) States possess statistics on the application of land-based or sea-based pollution standards, as well as of regulations governing maritime shipping, and treatment and use of ballast and bilge water (GloBallast programme). Recent assessments exist collating this information with appraisals of its impact at the national and regional levels.

5. What development of capacities is required?

(a) The south-east Pacific Group of Experts acknowledges the need to generate capacity to analyse the ocean environment in zones beyond national jurisdictions;

(b) Assessment of widescale processes at the level of the entire South Pacific basin is of great importance in understanding and predicting the

behaviour of biological resources, particularly those exhibiting migratory behaviour (birds, turtles, mammals and pelagic fish species) in the south-east Pacific region;

(c) Information on this vast ocean region of the South Pacific is scattered, and has not been summarized and collated, although it exists in the form of reports of scientific expeditions, historical records of fishing activities (fishing fleets) and a large number of scientific publications. Emphasis was placed on the significant increase in databases on biodiversity from 5 million entries in 2005 to over 32 million georeferenced records in 2011;

(d) The south-east Pacific region Group of Experts considered it essential in the short term to strengthen the capacities of the competent technical bodies with regard to integrated assessment methods. The drivers, pressure, state, impact, response methodology adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as the conceptual basis for carrying out this first cycle of integrated assessment of the marine environment, while known in the region and widely used in the terrestrial environment, has thus far not been regularly used in marine environment assessments. Note should be taken of the fruitful exchange of information between experts from the west coast of the Americas, from Mexico to Chile.[4]

C. Working Group III: socio-economic aspects

Coordinator: Mr. Alan Simcock

Rapporteur: Ms. Elsa Galarza (Peru)

10. The Working Group on socio-economic aspects gave comprehensive replies, first providing a brief description of the institutional framework in each Member State, then focusing their remarks on questions 1 to 3, distinguishing between the scope of each in respect of three areas: fisheries, transport and biodiversity, before moving onto short-term capacities requirements.

1. What assessments exist that might be useful in the regular process?

2. If there are no useful assessments available, is there unevaluated information that can be used?

3. Can any information lacunae that must be filled be identified?

(a) **Fisheries**. Macroinformation exists on employment, production and exports (value and quantity). There also exist environmental impact assessments of sensitive areas and zoning maps showing conflicts; artisanal fishing and quality of life survey and baseline (October 2011); and scattered diagnostics of some fisheries, such as the small pelagic species fishery, with a view to establishing a system of fishing quotas. Recent ecosystem impact studies also exist, as do comprehensive economic analysis studies, some based on the drivers, pressure, state, impact, response methodology. Economic assessment studies have relied on production function methodologies, from the

[4] In this connection the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia taking part in the workshop indicated that the Living Oceans Foundation conducts training programmes for fellows in marine biology from which Latin American experts have benefited, and that the Foundation is now conducting a coral reef research expedition, whose findings are public and available to experts in the south-east Pacific region.

standpoint of contribution to fisheries and tourism. Studies exist on industrial fishing for anchovies and hake (socio-economic analysis and bioeconomic estimates), as do databases of studies of artisanal fishing (structural surveys I and II of artisanal fishing off the Peruvian coast) and studies on the marketing of hydrobiological products. Various thesis studies. Food security studies with FAO: promotion of the consumption of fish. Studies of specific basins carried out by the National Natural Resources Assessment Office in the 1970s and 1980s;

(b) **Transport and other sectors**. Assessments exist of individual ports, of the tourist sector and of the use of beaches and national parks connected with the sea. Master land-management plans that in some cases include economic assessment of coastal marine zones. Economic impact assessment of ballast water with a view to regulating maritime transport. Economic assessment of water resources and biodiversity;

(c) **Biodiversity**. Economic assessment of marine reserves and their relationship to the installation of thermal power plants. Methodology for the economic assessment of coastal systems in various countries (ecosystem approach). Treatment of mangroves in proximity to communities and economic assessment of the benefits of mangroves. Regional master plans containing information on protected marine areas (biodiversity). Qualitative cultural (ethnographic) studies of perceptions of the change in value of the resources of indigenous communities. However, this cannot be quantified.

4. What evaluation procedures have been established informing decision-making in the region?

5. What development of capacities is required?

(a) Need to incorporate georeferencing information systems for ecosystem-focused analysis;

(b) Improvement of information and monitoring systems. Need to improve professional capacities with regard to economic issues;

(c) Need to compile base data, which is difficult and costly;

(d) Improve information systems that can be shared;

(e) Strengthen methodology for economic assessment (instrument);

(f) Pilot project in Chile to harmonize economic assessment methodologies.

III. Discussion

11. Following the presentations in the working groups, a general discussion and exchange of ideas was held by the experts, participants and observers on the outcome of the workshop. The main aspects of the discussion are summarized below:

(a) Bearing in mind the importance of the marine environment for humanity, participants in the workshop recognized that it provided an opportunity for countries to initiate specific actions to attain the objectives defined by the United Nations to

further the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects. In this regard, they reiterated the need to secure a commitment from Governments to further all the stages and cycles of the regular process, with the support of their experts;

(b) At the level of the South Pacific region, participants noted the existence of a significant accumulation of information on the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of the marine and coastal zone. However, this information does not permit the immediate application, without additional work, of integrated analysis methodologies. It was further noted that there is an obvious disparity between the quantity of physical and biological information available and information relating to socio-economic aspects;

(c) Participants considered it important to expand, as a matter of urgency, the database of information on the continental shelf of each country, and to extend it to areas beyond the continental shelf towards waters beyond national jurisdictions, in particular with regard to matters relating to ocean processes and biodiversity;

(d) The workshop determined that there was an urgent need for training to develop competencies that would improve the skill levels of experts in the region in matters within the purview of the regular process, especially in the drivers, pressure, state, impact, response methodology agreed on by the United Nations for use in analyses;

(e) The region contains expert capacity to address the commitments established in the guidelines for the regular process, which could be supported by experts from outside the region, and by the Group of Experts on the Regular Process appointed by the United Nations;

(f) Although each country is developing a significant set of research and other activities in areas of importance to the regular process, initiatives at the regional level in these areas are still inadequate, in view of which the capacities and competencies of the countries of the region must be strengthened;

(g) Experts in the region agreed to compile and make available to the regular process information available in the public domain identified during the workshop. This information will form part of the list of documents of importance to the regular process, information which the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific will add to the database of assessments and other information already in existence, which will be made available to all the experts.

IV. Results and conclusions of the workshop

12. There follows a list of the most significant results and conclusions of the workshop, adopted at the final working meeting, following consultation with all participants. The experts participating in the workshop agreed to highlight and identify the following as priorities:

(a) The need to follow the timetable for the regular process (annex II) within the established time frame, in view of which it was considered necessary for experts to request their respective Governments to constitute, as soon as possible, a group of experts on the basis of the criteria defined in annex I to document A/66/189, no later than October 2011;

(b) Recognize that, independently of the financial resources provided by the United Nations, the countries of the region must, through the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific and the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular its regional seas programme, encourage all Governments, international and intergovernmental bodies, and multilateral funding agencies, to make additional financial resources available to facilitate the conduct of the regular process;

(c) Creation in the region of a system of communication and follow-up to the regular process, allowing implementation of effective working and coordination mechanisms;

(d) Need for analysis and assessment of the existing information, background and knowledge to be complemented by subsequent analyses of the original studies, where relevant, by experts in the region, provided that they are in a position to support the regular process;

(e) Need to promote the establishment of a coordination mechanism for the conduct of assessments in ocean areas beyond national jurisdictions, in particular, with the participation of the littoral States of the western South Pacific;

(f) The importance of holding technical workshops in the region to promote horizontal South-South cooperation in the training of experts in the region.